

Message Text

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ACTION AF-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 IO-13 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05

H-01 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 SP-02

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9753

INFO AMEMBASSY MAPUTO

AMEMBASSY YAOUNDE

AMEMBASSY BRAZZAVILLE

AMEMBASSY DAR ES SALAAM

AMEMBASSY GABORONE

AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM

AMEMBASSY LAGOS

AMEMBASSY LUSAKA

AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS

AMEMBASSY BONN

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY PARIS

USMISSION USUN NEW YORK

AMEMBASSY KINSHASA

C O N F I D E N T I A L MONROVIA 4418

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: XA, OAU, LI

SUBJECT: CONSULTATIONS ON CONSIDERATION OF ZAIRE SITUATION AT

OAU SUMMIT

REF: (A) STATE 150348, (B) STATE 148408

1. IN PRESIDENT TOLBERT'S ABSENCE (AS DEPARTMENT KNOWS, HE IS IN SWITZERLAND AND WILL LEAVE SOON FROM THERE FOR A STATE VISIT TO PEKING), CHARGE DISCUSSED SUBJECT OF REFTELS WITH FOREIGN MINISTER DENNIS JUNE 15.

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2. CAUTIONING THAT HE HIMSELF HAD BEEN DOING A GREAT DEAL OF TRAVELING IN THE PAST TWO MONTHS AND HAD NOT BEEN ABLE TO DISCUSS THE ZAIRE SITUATION WITH PRESIDENT TOLBERT, DENNIS UNDERTOOK TO RESPOND, IN A SOMEWHAT RAMBLING FASHION, TO THE QUESTIONS RAISED IN REFTEL A.

3. DENNIS DID NOT APPEAR TO BE AWARE OF ANY EFFORTS UNDERWAY TO BUILD AN AFRICAN CONSENSUS IN SUPPORT OF NEGOTIATED SETTLEMENTS TO THE PROBLEMS OF CENTRAL AFRICA. IN HIS VIEW A SHAKING OF HANDS BETWEEN MOBUTU AND NETO "WILL NEVER HAPPEN THIS SIDE OF HEAVEN." NOR DOES HE SEE NETO ACCEPTING AN OAU PEACEKEEPING FORCE ALONG THE ZAIRE-ANGOLA BORDER. HE SAID NETO WOULD BE VERY CONCERNED THAT AMONG THESE FORCES MIGHT BE REPRESENTED SOME AFRICAN STATES NOT IN SYMPATHY WITH HIM OR HIS POLITICAL ORIENTATION. HE SAID WE CAN ALL TALK ABOUT FOREIGN TROOPS LEAVING AFRICA BUT THAT UNLESS THE SOVIETS TELL THEM TO LEAVE, THE CUBANS ARE IN ANGOLA TO STAY. HE ADDED THAT WHILE LIBERIA WOULD LIKE TO SEE ALL FOREIGN FORCES OUT OF AFRICA, HIS GOVERNMENT WOULD NEVER DENY THE RIGHT OF A SOVEREIGN STATE TO INVITE HELP FROM ITS FRIENDS TO PROTECT ITS NATIONAL INTERESTS. HE SAID THAT IF LIBERIA WERE THREATENED, HE WOULD SEEK HELP FROM SOUTH AFRICA (READ "THE DEVIL HIMSELF") IF NEED BE. HE ALSO RECOGNIZED THE RIGHT OF FOREIGN POWERS TO INTERVENE IN A SITUATION SUCH AS SHABA TO PROTECT THEIR NATIONALS.

4. AS FOR FOREIGN FORCES, HE SAID THEY ARE ALL OVER THE PLACE--SOVIETS AND CUBANS IN ANGOLA AND ETHIOPIA AND THE FRENCH IN WESTERN SAHARA, CHAD AND DJIBOUTI. THE PROBLEM WITH FACING THE SITUATION IN THE OAU IS THAT THE FRENCH PRESENCE RAISES THE SPECTOR OF A RETURN TO CONFIDENTIAL

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COLONIALISM WHILE THE SOVIETS AND THE CUBANS ARE NOT SO TAINTED.

5. WE AFRICANS DENNIS SAID, WANT TO BE ABLE TO CHOOSE AS WE PLEASE BETWEEN CAPITALISM, AFRICAN SOCIALISM OR COMMUNISM. THE THING THAT CONCERNS MODERATE AFRICAN STATES ABOUT THE SOVIET AND CUBAN PRESENCE (AND OF COURSE DENNIS CONSIDERS LIBERIA IN THE FOREFRONT) IS THAT AS THEIR PRESENCE (AND INFLUENCE) GROW THESE CHOICES ARE ELIMINATED.

6. IN THIS CONTEXT, HE SAID THAT PAST U.S. ADMINISTRATIONS HAVE IGNORED AFRICA AND THAT LIBERIA IS HAPPY WE ARE NOW PLAYING AN ACTIVE ROLE. HE SAID THE U.S. MUST CONTINUE TO BE ACTIVE IN ORDER TO RESTORE BALANCE.

7. AS FOR HIS FINAL THOUGHTS ON ZAIRE, HE SAID FUNDAMENTAL IS THAT ZAIRE BE ABLE TO ACT FROM A POSTURE OF STRENGTH VIS-A-VIS ANGOLA. HE SAID WE CAN BE SURE THAT WHENEVER THE AFRICAN TROOPS LEAVE, THE KATANGANS WILL BE RIGHT BACK. ONLY A STRONG ZAIRE, ABLE TO TAKE CARE OF ITSELF IN SUCH A SITUATION, WILL BE ABLE TO SOLVE THE ANGOLA-ZAIRE BORDER PROBLEM.

8. ASKED WHAT CONCILIATORY ROLE NIGERIA MIGHT BE ABLE TO PLAY IN THE ZAIRE-ANGOLA SITUATION, DENNIS CONFESSED THAT HE WAS UNSURE OF THE EXTENT OF NIGERIA'S INFLUENCE. HE SAID, FOR EXAMPLE, HE UNDERSTOOD RECENTLY GARBA WAS IN ANGOLA BUT WAS NOT ABLE TO SEE NETO. HE ALSO SAID GARBA WAS ACTIVE DURING THE TIME OF SHABA ONE BUT, IT SEEMED TO HIM, WITH LITTLE EFFECT.

9. RETURNING TO HIS THOUGHTS ABOUT THE OAU SUMMIT, HE SAID ONE OF THE OAU'S FIRST TASKS IS TO SOLVE THE PROBLEM OF WESTERN SAHARA. LIBERIA'S STAND IS THAT THE WESTERN SAHARAN PEOPLE HAVE A CLEAR RIGHT OF SELF-DETERMINATION. LET THERE BE A REFERENDUM AND IF THE PEOPLES WANT TO

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BECOME PARTS OF MAURITANIA AND MOROCCO, THAT'S FINE, BUT GIVE THEM THE RIGHT TO CHOOSE. HE SAID THE OAU WAS COMMITTED TO AN EXTRAORDINARY SUMMIT ON THE ISSUE WHICH IT WANTED TACKLED ON AT KHARTOUM. HE SAID A COUNCIL OF FOREIGN MINISTERS WOULD BE INEFFECTIVE IN ADDRESSING THIS ISSUE BUT IT IS DIFFICULT FOR HEADS OF STATE TO DEVOTE THE TIME NEEDED. PARENTHETICALLY HE NOTED THAT BONGO HAS STATED THAT HE IS UNHAPPY WITH THE DATES OF THE OAU SUMMIT IN KHARTOUM AND HE WONDERED JUST WHAT WAS ON BONGO'S MIND.

10. COMMENT: DENNIS GETS PARTICULARLY EXERCISED ABOUT WESTERN SAHARA, PARTLY BECAUSE IN LATE 1976 HE WAS IN THE CHAIR DURING A COUNCIL OF MINISTERS DEBATE ON THE SUBJECT. AS OTHER CONTACTS IN THE FOREIGN MINISTRY HAVE SUGGESTED TO US, WE ASSUME THAT SHABA WILL TAKE PRIORITY OVER OTHER ISSUES. DENNIS' VIEWS WERE CLEARLY TENTATIVE BUT HE IS TOTALLY RESPONSIVE TO THESE CONVERSATIONS AND THE EMBASSY RECOMMENDS THAT WE BE PROVIDED UPDATED GUIDANCE AS APPROPRIATE IN ORDER TO CONTINUE THEM. SINCE TOLBERT WILL BE OAU CHAIRMAN AND SUMMIT HOST NEXT YEAR, HE OBVIOUSLY WILL HAVE ADDED INFLUENCE AT KHARTOUM AND ADDED INTEREST THAT THINGS THERE GO AS WELL AS POSSIBLE.

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